

THE CASE OF LINDA SHENWICK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, there are times when Congress must act to protect the interests of individuals, in particular Federal civil servants who have been unfairly harmed by the actions of the Federal Government.

Recently, Congress acted to protect Billy Dale and the other employees of the White House Travel Office who were unfairly removed from their jobs and who were illegally targeted for investigation and prosecution. This Congress acted to protect those workers and to pay for their legal expenses.

Another case has presented itself that behooves Congressional action also. The case I speak of is the case of Linda Shenwick. Linda Shenwick has been an exemplary public servant since she started working at the State Department in 1979. The Weekly Standard reported that Ms. Shenwick was driven by a sense of public service and an interest in foreign affairs.

In 1984, Ms. Shenwick was transferred to the U.S. mission to the United Nations where she first was assigned to handle personnel and budget issues. She quickly carved out a reputation for diligence and hard work, which won her three consecutive outstanding ratings, the highest given, between 1987 and July of 1989. Her performance also won her regular promotions and in 1988 she was admitted to the Senior Executive Service, an elite corps of Federal civil servants.

In August 1991 and again in November 1993, representatives of the other U.N. member states elected Shenwick to serve on the influential Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, which recommends how U.N. money and personnel should be allocated. These votes of confidence reflected the respect accorded to her by U.N. officials and her service on the committee helped her acquire a detailed knowledge of the Byzantine U.N. budget process.

In her position, Ms. Shenwick repeatedly found evidence of deliberate waste, fraud and mismanagement in the United Nations. When she began reporting such evidence to her superiors at the start of the Clinton administration, her reports were ignored.

For instance, Ms. Shenwick reported in February 1993 that she had seen pictures of large amounts of U.S. currency stored openly on tables in Somalia. Without any recourse to prevent such budgetary abuse, she began notifying key Members of Congress about what she knew.

It later became public in April of 1994 that \$3.9 million of U.N. cash was reported stolen in Somalia. Ms. Shenwick's work helped Congress force

the U.N. to create an Office of Inspector General to end such fraud and mismanagement that occurred in Somalia.

Mr. Speaker, how has the Clinton administration and the State Department rewarded the stellar career of one of the most valuable civil servants this Nation has known? They began to sabotage her career by threatening her directly with removal from her position, with threats to destroy her financially and by beginning a process of false accusations and unsatisfactory reviews to harm her personnel files.

What they deliberately did to Ms. Shenwick was to set her up so that they could claim a cause for her removal. However, the evidence is abundantly clear that Ms. Shenwick was a remarkable civil servant dedicated to her job.

She has proven to be an invaluable asset for our Nation in confronting U.N. waste, fraud and abuse and mismanagement. She has been unfairly and illegally removed from her Federal position in contradiction to Federal law to protect civil servants, in contradiction to Federal laws to protect whistleblowers.

She should be reinstated to her former position, reimbursed for her personal expenses and have her personal files expunged of any unsatisfactory reviews or other false evidence to justify those reviews.

In fact, I offered an amendment to the State Department reauthorization bill that provided State Department employees such as she who, "in the performance of their duties inform the Congress of pertinent facts concerning their responsibilities should not, as a result, be demoted or removed from their current position or from Federal employment."

That amendment passed handily by a vote of 287-to-136, with 72 Democrat Members' support.

I believe we need to send a strong message by reiterating our belief that such injustices cannot be allowed to continue.

Recently, 52 of my colleagues joined me in sending a letter to Secretary Albright requesting that the Ms. Shenwick matter be resolved.

Mr. Speaker, we must take a stand against the abuse of a Federal civil servant who has done nothing but protect the interests of U.S. taxpayers and our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to let the State Department know that they cannot continue to punish employees who are whistleblowers.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 51 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. OSE) at noon.

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Theodore Schneider, Bishop of Washington, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

A hush has fallen over the House, Lord, and well it should.

You are the creator and You sustain all things. Before You the generations rise and fall, before You, Lord, nations have come and they have gone.

We have been called by our people to manage the things of government. They expect of us integrity, wisdom and vision. They hunger for justice, for good and equal opportunities, so they may be all they are able to become.

We have been called by You, Lord, as stewards of lands, of resources, of human and social opportunities, and of the things that make for peace and foster posterity. You call us to be champions of justice and protectors of the poor.

Watch over us as we continue our debates upon fiscal budgets and the works of our government that initiate, protect and nurture hope and the well-being of our people and our communities. Keep before us the needs of all our people, especially those that would be so easy to forget; the homeless, the sick, the destitute, the aged, and all who have none to care for them.

Let Your Spirit nurture our thirst for the things that make for peace in our land and among the nations of this earth.

Through our people You have called us, Lord, to be stewards of all you have so graciously bestowed upon us. Clear our minds, open our hearts, and extend our vision so that we might be for our people all Your grace enables us to become.

Turn this parliamentary pause, Father, into our perfect prayer. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

DISPENSING WITH CALL OF PRIVATE CALENDAR ON TODAY

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the call of the Private Calendar be dispensed with today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2116, VETERANS MILLENNIUM HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS ACT

Mr. STUMP submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 2116) to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a program of extended care services for veterans and to make other improvements in health care programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs:

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 106-470)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2116), to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a program of extended care services for veterans and to make other improvements in health care programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate to the text of the bill and agree to the same with an amendment as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the Senate amendment, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE.*—This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act”.

(b) *TABLE OF CONTENTS.*—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.

Sec. 3. Secretary and Department defined.

TITLE I—ACCESS TO CARE

Subtitle A—Long-Term Care

Sec. 101. Requirement to provide extended care services.

Sec. 102. Pilot programs relating to long-term care.

Sec. 103. Pilot program relating to assisted living.

Subtitle B—Other Access-to-Care Matters

Sec. 111. Reimbursement for emergency treatment in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities.

Sec. 112. Eligibility for care of combat-injured veterans.

Sec. 113. Access to care for TRICARE-eligible military retirees.

Sec. 114. Treatment and services for drug or alcohol dependency.

Sec. 115. Counseling and treatment for veterans who have experienced sexual trauma.

Sec. 116. Specialized mental health services.

TITLE II—MEDICAL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Sec. 201. Medical care collections.

Sec. 202. Health Services Improvement Fund.

Sec. 203. Allocation to health care facilities of amounts made available from Medical Care Collections Fund.

Sec. 204. Authority to accept funds for education and training.

Sec. 205. Extension of certain authorities.

Sec. 206. Reestablishment of Committee on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Sec. 207. State home grant program.

Sec. 208. Expansion of enhanced-use lease authority.

Sec. 209. Ineligibility for employment by Veterans Health Administration of health care professionals who have lost license to practice in one jurisdiction while still licensed in another jurisdiction.

Sec. 210. Report on coordination of procurement of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

Sec. 211. Reimbursement of medical expenses of veterans located in Alaska.

TITLE III—MISCELLANEOUS MEDICAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 301. Review of proposed changes to operation of medical facilities.

Sec. 302. Patient services at Department facilities.

Sec. 303. Chiropractic treatment.

Sec. 304. Designation of hospital bed replacement building at Ioannis A. Lougaris Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Reno, Nevada.

TITLE IV—CONSTRUCTION AND FACILITIES MATTERS

Sec. 401. Authorization of major medical facility projects.

Sec. 402. Authorization of major medical facility leases.

Sec. 403. Authorization of appropriations.

TITLE V—BENEFITS AND EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

Subtitle A—Compensation and DIC

Sec. 501. Dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses of former prisoners of war.

Sec. 502. Reinstatement of certain benefits for remarried surviving spouses of veterans upon termination of their remarriage.

Sec. 503. Presumption that bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma is service-connected.

Subtitle B—Employment

Sec. 511. Clarification of veterans' civil service employment opportunities.

TITLE VI—MEMORIAL AFFAIRS MATTERS

Subtitle A—American Battle Monuments Commission

Sec. 601. Codification and expansion of authority for World War II memorial.

Sec. 602. General authority to solicit and receive contributions.

Sec. 603. Intellectual property and related items.

Sec. 604. Technical amendments.

Subtitle B—National Cemeteries

Sec. 611. Establishment of additional national cemeteries.

Sec. 612. Use of flat grave markers at Santa Fe National Cemetery, New Mexico.

Sec. 613. Independent study on improvements to veterans' cemeteries.

Subtitle C—Burial Benefits

Sec. 621. Independent study on improvements to veterans' burial benefits.

TITLE VII—EDUCATION AND HOUSING MATTERS

Subtitle A—Education Matters

Sec. 701. Availability of Montgomery GI Bill benefits for preparatory courses for college and graduate school entrance exams.

Sec. 702. Determination of eligibility period for members of the Armed Forces commissioned following completion of officer training school.

Sec. 703. Report on veterans' education and vocational training benefits provided by the States.

Sec. 704. Technical amendments.

Subtitle B—Housing Matters

Sec. 711. Extension of authority for housing loans for members of the Selected Reserve.

Sec. 712. Technical amendment relating to transitional housing loan guarantee program.

TITLE VIII—DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Sec. 801. Enhanced quality assurance program within the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Sec. 802. Extension of authority to maintain a regional office in the Republic of the Philippines.

Sec. 803. Extension of Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans.

Sec. 804. Technical amendment to automobile assistance program.

TITLE IX—HOMELESS VETERANS PROGRAMS

Sec. 901. Homeless veterans' reintegration programs.

Sec. 902. Extension of program of housing assistance for homeless veterans.

Sec. 903. Homeless veterans programs.

Sec. 904. Plan for evaluation of performance of programs to assist homeless veterans.

TITLE X—UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

Sec. 1001. Short title.

Sec. 1002. Definition.

Subtitle A—Transitional Provisions To Stagger Terms of Judges

Sec. 1011. Early retirement authority for current judges.

Sec. 1012. Modified terms for next two judges appointed to the Court.

Subtitle B—Other Matters Relating to Retired Judges

Sec. 1021. Recall of retired judges.